

Schenectady City School District

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January 08, 2021

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Rick DeCarr is named Schenectady Teacher of the Year

SCHENECTADY – Rick DeCarr, a 6th grade English Language Arts/Social Studies Teacher at Oneida Middle School, was named the Schenectady City School District 2021 Teacher of the Year. Interim Superintendent Aaron Bochniak, made the surprise announcement during DeCarr’s online class Friday afternoon.

“I am extremely proud to be recognizing Mr. DeCarr today,” said Bochniak. “He is absolutely deserving of this honor. I have seen, firsthand, his commitment, innovation and creativity, care and kindness and, most importantly, the impact that he has on his students.”

DeCarr, who has been an educator in Schenectady since 2008, was nominated for the honor by Tony Farina, principal of Oneida Middle School. Farina noted that DeCarr is a leader at both the building and district level. He has been integral in the district’s transition to remote learning in response to the pandemic, is also a leader on the district’s technology committee, and is the 6th grade-level leader.

DeCarr is a member of Oneida’s Anti-Racist Leadership Team and according to Farina is “instrumental in working to eliminate disproportionality by engaging students through culturally relevant curriculum and instruction.” He also served as a leader on the Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports (PBIS) committee

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and pioneered the school's "Leaders of the Pack" student recognition program. DeCarr is founder of an array of student activities and events including field day and the kickball tournament.

"Mr. DeCarr is an amazing educator and teacher leader," said Farina. "He is revered throughout the district and never looks for accolades."

DeCarr's students, former students and their parents agree. They couldn't say enough about how this 'teacher of the year' has impacted their lives.

"He as impacted me in such a way by helping me through a tough time in my life which took me a while to get through," said one of DeCarr's students. "He helped me grow as an athlete and an overall person."

"You are one of my favorite teachers ever. You always push me to be my best and I'm honestly so happy that you came into my life," said Lilly Vanwormer, a former student of DeCarr's. She said that her former teacher pushed her to be the best version of herself. "Thank you so much Mr. DeCarr," said Vanwormer.

"He deserves this award 100% because he is an amazing teacher and he cares more about the students than the grades," said 8th grader Meha Elawad. "Mr. DeCarr helped me understand writing and myself. He helped me to express how I feel."

"When I was a student of Mr. DeCarr's I had the best educational experience of my life," said Michael Daley, former student, now in 9th grade. "He was a very good teacher and the best teacher I have had." He added that DeCarr impacted him academically and athletically. "He has affected me as a person and he made me who I am today," said Daley. "He has always been there for me."

"Mr. DeCarr is more than deserving of this honor," said Cara Mastan, now a 9th grader. "From my perspective, he deserves this award for the next hundred years. I have never met any person like Mr. DeCarr and I will forever be grateful that he was my teacher and is my coach in both running and life."

"He is a teacher who not only cares greatly about his students, but also helps them thrive beyond their year with him," said Alyssa Gangaram, former student, now an 11th grader. It's very evident that he values the experiences of his students and wants to see them do their best. He's a person who is passionate about teaching and has impacted many students' lives."

"Mr. DeCarr has prepared me to progress and keep trying," said former student Erica Faison. "I learned that it is okay to fail and make mistakes. He helped me learn from my mistakes as well as to keep trying and never give up. I can say that it has stuck with me."

“Mr. DeCarr most definitely deserves this honor. He is the most loyal, exciting, and impacting teacher I know, said Isabella Ayers, former student. “There are no real words to describe what he has done for all his students. Deserving of this award.”

Nafisah Bacchus, parent, said “Mr. DeCarr was always such an easy person to talk to and get information from. My son still talks about him and refers to him when he needs any assistance.” Bacchus agrees that DeCarr “definitely deserves this award.”

“Mr. DeCarr is wonderful and always made us feel welcomed,” said Katie Small, parent. “He always had time for us and was always there for anything we needed for our son for school and sports. We enjoyed our time with Mr. DeCarr and couldn’t be happier that our son not only had him for a teacher but also a coach and mentor.”

“I cannot think of someone more deserving of this honor,” said Carron Blanchet, parent. “He is a teacher and coach the district should deservedly celebrate.”

As the Schenectady City School District Teacher of the Year, DeCarr is eligible to enter the New York State Teacher of the Year contest.

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